

**Elements of Plot****ACADEMIC VOCABULARY**

**plot:** the series of events in a story

**exposition:** the first stage of plot, introducing the story's characters and setting

**conflict:** a struggle between opposing forces; drives the narrative forward

**rising action:** events that develop and build conflict, increasing interest

**climax:** the high point of the conflict, when the tension is greatest

**falling action:** events that result from the decision or action of the climax

**resolution:** the final outcomes in the story

**HERE'S HOW**

**Step 1: Identify the exposition.** The plot's exposition introduces the story's characters, setting, and basic situation.

**EXAMPLE** Snow White lives with her stepmother, a wicked queen, who is so vain that she insists on being the most beautiful woman in the land.

**Step 2: Look for the conflict.** The important conflict is the biggest problem or struggle that the story presents—usually to the main character.

**EXAMPLE** Snow White's beauty eventually outshines that of the queen. The jealous queen hires a hunter to kill Snow White.

**Step 3: Observe how the rising action develops.** The rising action is the events in the story that enlarge the conflict and increase reader interest.

**EXAMPLE** The hunter tells Snow White to run away. She hides in a cottage with seven little men. The queen tricks her into biting a poison apple. The men chase the queen to her death and guard Snow White's sleeping body.

**Step 4: Look for the climax.** The climax is the turning point of the story.

**EXAMPLE** A handsome prince learns about the sleeping princess. He finds Snow White and kisses her. She wakes from her deathlike sleep.

**Step 5: Recognize falling action and resolution.** After the turning point, the original conflict decreases or resolves, although new ones may be introduced.

**EXAMPLE** Snow White marries the prince and they live happily ever after.

**Step 6: Understand how the plot elements affect meaning.** Does the plot affect your emotions or make you laugh? How? Events in the plot may give an insight.

**EXAMPLE** The plot of Snow White shows that jealousy can be poisonous and goodness is a path to happiness, although it can be a bumpy one.